

The Elementary English Review

VOL. XVI

OCTOBER 1939

No. 6

CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK — NOVEMBER 12-18

Special Number: Children's Books and Reading

On a Certain Consideration in Writing for Boys and Girls.

HELEN FERRIS

Johnny Goes on Trial: An Operetta for Book Week—

DELMA LEE BRAZIER and VIOLA FAMIANO

Watching Children's Growth in Outside Reading . . . MARCELLA MASON

The Fable as a Medium for Character Education SADIE GOLDSMITH

Children's Choices of Reading Material FLORENCE BRUMBAUGH

Predicting Reading Difficulty of Selections for Children . . IRVING LORGE

Vocabulary Problems in the Elementary School: A Digest of

Current Research J. C. SEEGER

With the Fall Books for Boys and Girls.

EDITORIAL: "What Are Little Boys Made Of?"

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

C. C. CERTAIN, *Editor*

Detroit, Michigan

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Table of Contents

On a Certain Consideration in Writing for Boys and Girls	213
HELEN FERRIS	
Johnny Goes on Trial: An Operetta for Book Week ..	216
DELMA LEE BRAZIER and VIOLA FAMIANO	
Watching Children's Growth in Outside Reading....	221
MARCELLA MASON	
The Fable as a Medium for Character Education.....	223
SADIE GOLDSMITH	
Children's Choices of Reading Material.....	226
FLORENCE BRUMBAUGH	
Predicting Reading Difficulty of Selections for Children	229
IRVING LORGE	
Vocabulary Problems in the Elementary School: A Digest of Current Research.....	234
J. C. SEEGER	
With the Fall Books for Boys and Girls.....	240
EDITORIAL: "What Are Little Boys Made Of?".....	247

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW is published monthly from October to May at Detroit, Michigan. Subscription price \$2.50 per year; single copies 40 cents. Orders for less than a year's subscription will be charged at the single-copy rate. Postage is prepaid on all orders from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoan Islands, Virgin Islands and Spain. Postage is charged extra for Canada and for all other countries in the Postal Union as follows: 24 cents on annual subscriptions (total \$2.74), on single copies 3 cents (total 43 cents). Patrons are requested to make all remittances payable to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW in postal or express money orders or bank drafts. Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers expect to supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and when the reserve stock will permit. All communications should be addressed to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, Box 67, North End Station, Detroit, Michigan. Entered at the Post Office at Seymour, Ind., and at Detroit, Michigan, as second class matter.

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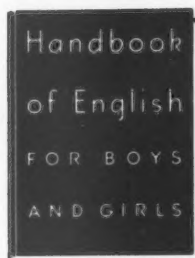
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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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No. 6

On A Certain Consideration in Writing for Boys and Girls

HELEN FERRIS

Editor-in-Chief, Junior Literary Guild

A letter lies upon my desk. "I am interested in children, I like to write and believe that I can, so I have decided to combine the two. But because I realize that writing for children is different, I am turning to you for suggestions. Aren't there some things one should do, and not do, when writing for boys and girls? I shall appreciate any help you can give me."

What to do, what not to do . . . between me and the pages of the letter comes swift surge of memory.

It is bedtime and Mother is reading aloud. My brother is in his bed across the room; I on the couch, the afghan snugly around me; Mother in the low, comfortable chair beneath the light; the house breathlessly still save for

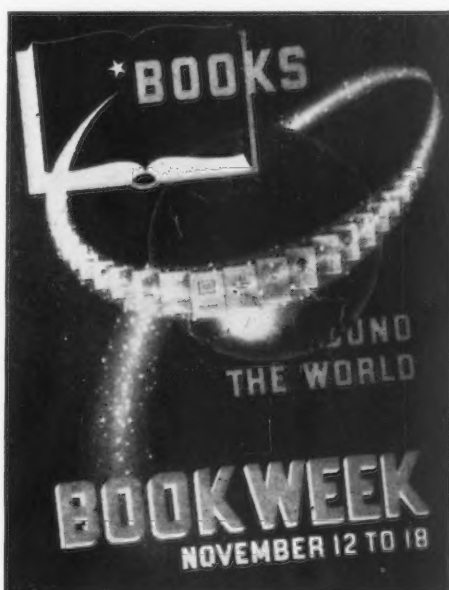
the cadences of Mother's voice, rising and falling, now softly gentle, now vividly dramatic.

And the stories! Books discovered by Mother only through arduous searching among the shelves at the Public Library, for there were no Children's Rooms then. Books of our hearts, tucked where we ourselves never could have found them. Books at bedtime, with the light turned out too soon.

But there were some nights, and all three of us instinctively recognized them when they arrived, when we couldn't, simply couldn't, stop at the appointed time. Al-

ways on Friday or Saturday nights, I remember!

Not every week. But now and then,



Book Week Poster, 1939

"Go on, Mother. Go on, Mother," we would cry.

Mother would look at the clock. "What will your father say?"

"We'll explain," we declared protectingly. "Go on."

"Well—". And on and on in the magic story until—

A key clicks in the stillness of the front hall below. It is Father, returning from the work which so often took him out in the evening. Mother does not pause nor stir. But my brother and I wriggle in excitement.

Steadily on, with never a glance at Father, tall and questioning, now in the doorway. Then, in mock severity, he asks, "What's this? What do you mean, keeping our children awake at this hour?"

With a shout and a jump we are upon him. "It's not her fault, Father. We made her, honestly we did. It's the best story we ever read. Honestly, Father."

Gravely Father considers it. "The best story? Ummm. Well, if it really is . . ."

The game is on. With eager, tumbling words, my brother and I tell what has happened so far. Then once more the stillness of the house and the musical cadences of Mother's voice. Bolt upright in his bed, the covers twisted about him, my brother listens. My own back like a poker, I watch Father's face.

Sometimes, in a page or two, Father coughs and says, "Oh, come now, what's this?"

There is no recourse. The newspaper marker goes into the book. The light is turned out.

But other times, Father relaxes on the edge of the bed. Softly Mother turns page after page, on and on until it is gorgeously late, even ten thirty!

Again the surge of memory. . . .

A young girl is hurrying along the sidewalk. It is winter. Cold crunch of snow is beneath her hastening feet, warmth of early lighted lamps in the windows of the houses beside her way, coolness of slowly drifting snowflakes upon her cheeks. It is spring, and all about her the sweetness of spring, in the little leaves, the freshness of young grass, the gentleness of the quietly setting sun. It is summer, and the heat which has been the accompaniment of her day's ardent activities yields no surcease now in cooling breeze. Hot scorching wind from the prairie blows on. Yet the girl does not slacken her pace. It is autumn, tumultuous glory of red and orange and yellow, stinging acrid scent of burning leaves and once more mellow, comforting lights. But always, the hurrying feet. Ever the impelling thought that if she can reach home soon enough, there will be time to read her book before she must set the table for supper.

Through the years of my growing up, it winds brightly, a memory changing in its ultimate lure as the seasons themselves changed, bringing fresh magic. Changing, yet unchanged. Always, the book that is waiting. Ever the hurrying feet, symbol of the eager response which the young have always given, will always give to life pulsing upon the printed page.

As I return to your letter, those hurrying feet persist. I hear the quick beat of them when you ask what to do, what not to do, seeking rules, a pattern. I cannot give you what you seek. I know no rules. I have never come upon a certain pattern. For where is there certitude in the creating of life?

Yet in your questioning I find implicit recognition of two great essentials in writing for boys and girls—understand-

ing of the children themselves, and your own purpose as a writer.

Between us who are older and those who are young is thrust the inevitable bafflement of time. The young, infinite in variety of temperament, swift in change of mood. Each an individual in his own right, no more rigidly to be classified than any other human being of whatever age, ever desiring in his own reading that which is his special own. How can we, whom the years have so relentlessly removed from childhood's ways, hope to satisfy that desire?

It is our good fortune that amid the bewildering variety of temperament and consequent individuality in reading preferences among boys and girls there nevertheless emerge certain kindred enthusiasms. And though we shall never be able fully to enter into those young minds, though at the very moment of our greatest confidence they are prone to flash upon us unsuspected facets of enjoyment, or of scornful rejection of that which we have felt assured would appeal to them, if we watch and wait, we shall have our reward in deepened comprehension. Each revelation of unsuspected enjoyment, each rejection is one more bit of treasureable evidence regarding that which may happily be written for them. I say to you then: Go to the children. Learn all you can concerning them, by being their friend, if you would write for them.

Of that other great essential, your own purpose as a writer, only you can judge. Thinking of the decision before you, I strive to go beyond your words. Are you turning to writing for children because there lurks within you the thought that such is a ready way, a pleasant apprenticeship, with your more important and difficult accomplishment as an author to be entered upon when technical skill in your

chosen art shall be more completely at your command? I trust this is not the case. Books which bring young feet hurrying to them are not lightly created. Here, no less than with an audience more mature, if you would write compellingly you will have need for utmost skill in your craft, you must pay the price universally exacted of every writer for the achieving of excellence.

For in the most vital sense, writing for children is not different, unique, of a special kind. Here on the shelves beside me stand *Little Women*, *David Copperfield*; *Treasure Island*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*; *Wind in the Willows*, *Green Mansions*. Those more real than my dearest friends are real; struggle, victory, defeat; stalwart endeavor; derring-do; lyrical beauty; bright strands of laughter—I find in these volumes, whether for young or old, books winnowed from the many by the generations' sure instinct, our heritage of literature. In the journals of their authors I meet a similar record: the earnest, honest effort of the writer to perfect himself in his craft. And again the conviction sweeps over me that in the ultimate judging there is no such thing as *children's literature*. *Little Women*, *David Copperfield*—literature alike, and in them both clarity of vision and of comprehension, depth of understanding, genius in the writing medium—magically combined to bring forth living pages for our delight and enrichment.

Good writing is good writing wherever found. Nor is there a special kind of writing for younger readers that is otherwise. In this moment of your deciding, therefore, I do not speak first of the children and their desires. I ask you this and this alone: is the liking that you mention in reality a sincere and profound determination to go forward in the art which you conceive to be your own? Is there

Johnny Goes on Trial

An Operetta for Book Week

DELMA LEE BRAZIER and VIOLA FAMIANO

Franklin School, Lakewood, Ohio

FOREWORD: Last year at Franklin School in Lakewood, Ohio, we were called upon to present a Book Week program. At once we realized that we did not have proper facilities for presenting a dramatic production. We lacked an auditorium, a stage, scenery, costumes, money, and suitable Book Week material for correlating music and dramatics. We knew that a play containing speaking parts only could not be given by children from the first grade through the sixth grade in a manner that would be of interest to an audience. In spite of these handicaps, we formulated a very interesting program and we would like to share our Franklin experience with other teachers who may be confronted with problems similar to ours.

Two of the teachers adapted the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *Trial by Jury* to our use. This adaptation is plastic in that it lends itself to additions and substitutions of books or characters. It gives the teacher and the children individual freedom in the choice of the section of the book to be presented and also in the method of presentation. In fact, the musical play which follows serves only to introduce various acts and to suggest ways of presenting them.

Staging, scenery and costuming may be as simple or as elaborate as desired.

ALMA E. JOHNSON, *Principal*
Franklin School
Lakewood, Ohio

NOTE: The operetta is adapted by permission from the Oliver Ditson edition of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury*. Verses are set to the music of this edition, to which page numbers refer. Passages quoted

are taken verbatim from the Oliver Ditson edition.

Books may be presented by class groups in the following ways: shadow play, pantomime, radio quiz bee, dance, tableau, parade of characters, book float, dramatization, verse choir.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BAILIFF, Safety Council costume

USHER, Court gown

MISS HELENA, Librarian, Plaintiff.

(These are on stage when play opens)

HEAD JUROR

ELEVEN JURORS: dressed as adults

JOHNNY-WON'T-READ, Defendant. Play clothes or fishing outfit.

JUDGE: in spectacles, choir robe, and gavel

WITNESSES: *Mother Goose* (Kindergartners); *Three Little Kittens* (1B); *Robert Frances Weatherby* (1A); *Christopher Robin* (2AB); Alice and Jerry in *Friendly Village* (3B); Alice and Jerry in *If I Were Going* (3A); Thorkel of *Reindeer of the Waves* (4th); *Those Plummer Children* (5th); *Tom Sawyer* (6th); *Swallows and Amazons* (6th).

SCENE

Courtroom. In center is judge's bench. Right, Juror's box. Left, entrance.

JURY CHORUS (*Enters singing, page 8*).

"Hark the hour of ten is sounding;
Hearts with anxious fears are bounding,
Hall of Justice crowds surrounding
Breathing hope and fear
For today in this arena
Summoned by a stern subpoena"
Johnny, sued by Miss Helena
Shortly will appear.
(*Jury take seats,*)

USHER: (*Sings, page 11-12*).

"Now jury men hear my advice
All kinds of vulgar prejudice
I pray you set aside,
I pray you set aside.
With stern judicial frame of mind,
From bias free of every kind
(*points with emphasis*)
This trial must be tried."

JURY: "From bias free of every kind
This trial must be tried."

USHER (*Page 13*): "Oh listen to the plaintiff's case,
Observe the features of her face
(*gestures to Miss Helena*)
Dismay and injured pride
Cause her a great distress of mind
(*decisively*)
From bias free of every kind
This trial must be tried"

JURY (*echoes*): "From bias free of every kind
This trial must be tried."

USHER: "And when the plaintiff's story's heard
The ruffian demands a word
Upon the other side.
What he may say you needn't mind.
From bias free of every kind
This trial must be tried."

JURY (*repeats*): "From bias free etc."

DEFENDANT (*running in, looking about with an air of uncertainty*):

"Is this the Court of the Exchequer?"

JURY: It is.

DEFENDANT (*defiantly*): "If this is the Exchequer,
Your evil star's in the ascendant."

JURY: Who are you?

DEFENDANT (*proudly*): I'm the defendant.

JURY (*shaking fists, p. 16*): "Monster, dread
our damages
We're the jury
Dread our fury!"

DEFENDANT (*pleadingly*): "Hear me, hear
me if you please

These are very strange proceedings
For permit me to remark
On the merits of my pleadings
You're at present in the dark."

JURY (*derisively*): "Ha! ha! ha!
That's a very true remark
On the merits of your pleading,
We're entirely in the dark.
Ha! ha! ho! ho! ha! ha! ho! ho!"

DEFENDANT (*sings, p. 18*):

When first I learned to read, to read
My heart was filled with joy.
The stories that I read, it's true,
Made me a happy boy,
But when some boys called me to play,
I pushed my books aside,
To play and play the live long day
And from my reading hide.

(*Swings along*) Tink a tank, tink a tank, tink
a tank

JURY (*repeats*): Tink a tank

DEFENDANT: Tink a tank, tink a tank, tink
a tank.

JURY: Tink a tank

(*Shaking heads and nodding to one another*)

To play and play the live long day
And from his reading hide.

DEFENDANT (*page 18*):

The boys I knew thought it more fun
To fish in babbling brooks
We tho't to play some games and run
Better than reading books.
And then my friends of storyland
Became just a memory.
To me all books are pesky bores (*Dismissing gesture*)
Not worth a thing, you see
Tink a tank, etc.

USHER (*sings—p. 22*):

"Silence in court, and all attention lend!
Behold your judge; in due submission
bend!"

(*Judge enters*)

JURY (*Page 23*):

"All hail great judge
To your bright rays
We never grudge
Honor and praise.
All hail, all hail, all hail, all hail!"

JUDGE (*sings—p. 31*):

"Swear thou the jury."

USHER: "Kneel jurors all, oh kneel"

(*Jury kneels in time with piano chords.
They raise their right hands*)

USHER: "Oh will you swear by yonder skies

Whatever question may arise
'Twixt rich and poor
'Twixt low and high
That you will well and truly try?"

JURY (*rises—p. 32*):

To all of this we make reply
By the bright sun in yonder sky
That we will well and truly try

JUDGE (*recites—p. 24*): For these kind words

accept my thanks, I pray
A libel suit we have to try to-day
Call forth the witnesses to prove your
case.

BAILIFF (*announces*): Attention, every witness,
take your place.

(*Same music to call in each witness, p. 33*)

USHER (*sings*): Forward first witness

Let her now be brought
Paging Mother Goose
Come you into court,
Mother Goose!

JURY (*echoes*): Mother Goose!

(*Older girl dressed as Mother Goose enters*)

MOTHER GOOSE (*Sings "Singing Lady's" Radio
Theme Song*):

Little Boy Blue come blow your horn
Call all the funny folk out of the corn
Show Master John we do our part
To give all the tiny tots their reading start.
(*Kindergartners dramatize Mother Goose
rhymes.*)

USHER (*sings*): Second witnesses

Let them now be brought
Three little kittens,

Come you into court

Three Little Kittens

(*Jury echoes, Three Little Kittens*)

LIBRARIAN (*stands and says, addressing
Johnny*):

Like Mother Goose, in our nursery days,
We loved the Three Little Kittens.

(*Verse Choir recites Three Little Kittens*)

USHER (*sings*): Forward third witness

Let him now be brought.
Robert Frances Weatherby,
Come you into court
Robert Frances Weatherby.
(*Jury echoes*)

LIBRARIAN (*addressing Johnny*):

A boy like you
Who grew and grew
Without learning to read
Soon learned the error of his ways,
From his lesson, take heed.
(*Group dramatizes Robert Frances Weatherby*)

USHER (*sings*): Forward next witnesses

Let them now be brought
Alice and Jerry
Come you into court
Alice and Jerry.
(*Jury echoes, Alice and Jerry*)

LIBRARIAN (*says*): More fun for American
boys you'll see,
If you will but tarry
With Alice and Jerry.
(*Scene chosen from Friendly Village enacted*)

LIBRARIAN (*says*): Have you ever gone a
traveling on a rainy day?

With a book in a cozy corner,
Is the very nicest way.
(*Scene chosen from Alice and Jerry
Series If I Were Going dramatized*)

USHER (*sings*): Forward sixth witness

Let him now be brought,
Christopher Robin,
Come you into court,
Christopher Robin.
(*Jury echoes Christopher Robin*)

LIBRARIAN (*says*): At Buckingham Palace
 The changing Guards
 March round and round
 The castle yards.
 (*Christopher Robin appears in a skit from one of Milne's books*)

USHER (*sings*): Forward seventh witness!
 Let him now be brought
 Come, oh Thorkel,
 Come you into court.
 Come, oh Thorkel.
 (*Jury echoes*)

LIBRARIAN (*says*): Books are our friends;
 How rich we are;
 They take us places
 Near and far,
 And we should love them, for, indeed,
 We'll learn much from them
 If we read.
 (*Scene from Reindeer of the Waves enacted*)

USHER (*sings*): Eighth witnesses!
 Let them now be brought,
 The Plummer Children,
 Come you into court,
 Plummer children!
 (*Jury echoes*)

LIBRARIAN (*says*): The Plummer's pickaninies
 Will really win your heart.
 To better understand their race,
 This book will be a start
 (*Scene from Plummer Children enacted*)

USHER (*sings*): Witness number nine
 Let him now be brought
 Come forth, Tom Sawyer
 Come you into Court.
 Tom Sawyer!
 (*Jury echoes*)

LIBRARIAN (*says*): Adventures of some boys
 like you,
 You'll read about them here.
 We know that you will really enjoy
 Reading about his peppy boy.
 (*Scene from Tom Sawyer dramatized*)

USHER (*sings*): Witnesses numbered ten

Let them now be brought;
 Swallows and Amazons,
 Come you into court.
 Swallows and Amazons!
 (*Jury echoes*)

LIBRARIAN (*says*): Of outdoor life you like so
 well,
 Amazons and Swallows tell.
 (*Scene enacted from Swallows and Amazons*)

JUDGE (*sings—p. 68*): The question, jurors,
 Is one of great importance.
 You ask for guidance on the case at hand,
 Defendant Johnny, have you any answer
 To all the witnesses you've heard?

JOHNNY (*sings, p. 64. His attitude is changed and repentant*):
 May it please you, your honor
 I know now my error
 For believing all books were a bore
 How blind was my thinking
 When from books I was shrinking
 My loss I shall ever deplore.
 I now see what blessing
 What joy in possessing
 The books with their stories galore.
 To all I'm addressing,
 This wish I'm expressing:
 My former name please restore
 To Johnny Will-read.

JUDGE (*sings, p. 65*):
 We're glad you're repenting
 From folly relenting
 You talk like a sensible lad
 Instead of dissenting
 You're wise in presenting
 The view that you're no longer bad.
 Mercy I am extending,
 And, too, recommending—
 Place him in Miss Helena's custody.
 (*Johnny and librarian smile at each other*)

HEAD JUROR (*stands and sings*):
 His ways he'll be mending
 This verdict we're rendering
 His former name we'll decree—

JURY (*rises*): Hail, Johnny Will-read!

ALL (*Sing finale—bottom p. 71*):

Oh joy unbounded
With books surrounded
The knell is sounded
Of grief and woe.
It seems to me, Sir,
Of such is he, Sir,
A judge is he, Sir,
And a good judge, too!

JUDGE: For I am a judge.

CHORUS: And a good judge, too!

JUDGE: Yes, I am a judge!

CHORUS: And a good judge, too!

JUDGE: Tho' homeward as you trudge

You declare my law is fudge,

Yet of boys I'm a judge.

CHORUS: And a good judge, too!

JUDGE: The defendant now is changed,

CHORUS: And a great change, too!

JUDGE: The defendant now is changed,

CHORUS: And a great change, too!

The defendant now is changed.

We'll release him from the charge.

So we've settled this hard job

And a good job, too!

ON A CERTAIN CONSIDERATION IN WRITING

(Continued from page 215)

within you an irresistible compulsion to write?

If so, sources of help lie abundantly about you as you seek to develop the excellence of craftsmanship which must now be added to the writing potentialities already yours. The ways and means by which that technical skill in the writer's art is to be achieved, you yourself must seek and find, according to your needs: in the books upon the shelves; in the lives of authors as they themselves or others have written of those lives; in the experiences of your immediate contemporaries and of those somewhat further along your chosen path; in the criticism of understanding but discriminating

friends. Returning ever and always to the inevitable hours of your solitude and vision, of your contemplation and striving. The way of the artist in words.

According to the strength, the power, the integrity and the richness of life that is within you, you will make of your dream, your hope—living reality. And if what you write is for children, be assured that when you have created truly and well, they will zestfully take to their hearts that which you have brought forth for them. Nor can any writer's reward be more joyous than the delighted recognition unfailingly accorded by boys and girls for that which they unerringly know to be their own.

Watching Children's Growth in Outside Reading

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JOE'S ELBOWS protruded through the holes in his faded lumberjack and his hair needed cutting. He ran down the school steps and looked quickly about for an acquaintance who was already sauntering down the street. A sharp whistle from Joe halted his friend and the two proceeded in deep conversation. Where did they go? What would they do?

We have long known that the closing of school each afternoon usually means the closing of books for the day. Just as long have we hoped that some of the out-of-school time would be spent with library books. Were children coming from families where income were meager, and who so frequently did not have parental or home stimulation, reading independently outside of school? What were they reading? Were magazines interesting to them, and what kinds? Did they read other materials? Newspapers? Did these children, like many others, read the "Big Little Books"? Were they reading literature that was desirable? Would there be evidences later in the year that the school had helped improve reading choices, and that it had helped to increase the amount of reading done?

On the whole, these were queries which only the children could answer, and so we made a survey of outside reading during the school year 1938-1939, in grades two to six, with four rooms reporting.

Many of the children in the school were, like Joe, underprivileged and un-

dernourished. They had little parental encouragement and found little in the home to stimulate wholesome reading tastes. Children of various races came here, and many in the school were below standardized reading norms. On the other hand, these children had excellent teachers who were serious, considerate, helpful, alert, resourceful, and ever interested in the children. Each classroom had a small library, and fortunately, the main city library was less than a dozen blocks away, easily accessible to the children.

In November, the fourth grade developed a Book Week activity. They visited the children's room at the city library and were taught how to use the card catalog, locate books and check them out. They culminated their library activity by giving an assembly to the school on how to use the library.

A check was taken in the fall before Book Week, one a short time afterwards, one in the winter, and the last was made in early spring. The teachers asked the children to write the names of books, magazines, newspapers, or anything else read independently during that week. No standards in reading choices were superimposed, but instead, the teachers emphasized that *everything* read during that week was to be listed. The children did not have to sign their names. Better still, the actual books themselves were displayed and no disparaging comments were made relative to those commonly disapproved by teachers.

The lists from each room were sent in and an analysis was made of the material. The six main types emerging from the reports were: advertisements, mostly stories intended to stimulate interest in certain products; newspapers; magazines, both the wholesome and undesirable; questionable books; worthwhile literature of both informational and fanciful types; and the "Big Little Books."

The advertisements consisted mainly of stories put out by a local bread company, the "Lone Ranger News" sponsored by another baking company, a health book and a Mother Goose book sent out by an insurance company. Their reading of this material indicated the dearth of more attractive material in their homes and showed also that their desire was strong enough to read whatever they had.

Until research can definitely allocate or experts specify the place of "Big Little Books" as to desirability, it seems advisable to consider them in their own separate category.

Several interesting facts were revealed in the study. Only five books commonly considered undesirable reading for children were listed from all rooms reporting during the entire period. Very few advertisements attracted these readers. In contrast to the lack of reading in these two classes, the comics were very popular. The children happily showed themselves to be of the universal mold through their unanimous interest in the funny papers. Few American children could resist the color, action, adventure, and ludicrous situations depicted in the comic sections.

Only one child below the fourth grade reported reading a newspaper. One can readily see that the vocabulary and journalistic style would be of little or no interest to the younger elementary child,

nor would the fine print be conducive to the young child's reading.

The magazine reports came from the middle grades. Magazines for young children were noticeably absent from the reports. This was not surprising in a district where incomes were insufficient to permit subscriptions to magazines. Most of those read were the common adult variety: *Life*, *Liberty*, *Look*, *Collier's*, and *The Saturday Evening Post* (in order of times mentioned). Since the proximity of materials is always an influence in their use, one would readily infer that these magazines were probably the only ones available in the homes.

In homes where there are no regular subscriptions to magazines, those read are usually procured from news stands or magazine boys, and it is to be noted that all of these magazines are among those having the highest news stand circulations. Each week's survey from the fourth, fifth and sixth grades brought reports of some questionable periodicals such as *True Story* and others of the like. Home availability was again evident here. Although the only definitely children's magazines listed were *Boys' Life* and *American Boy*, it was good to know there was some access to current juvenile publications.

Very little reading of questionable books was seen. Only five from all the reports could be regarded as undesirable. Each check showed the reading of "Big Little Books." These books have had a novel popularity with children because of their unique size (any boy could carry one easily in either back pocket) their large print, their low cost (a dime anywhere), and their content of adventure, comic, or favorite movie characters. The first report showed a preponderance of these books in the independent reading of the middle grade children. Each later

The Fable as a Medium for Character Education

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THE FABLE, early memory of every childhood, has lately been placed on trial to determine its value in character education. Long regarded as a source of moral training and administered in academic doses like a sugar-coated pill, the fable is now being viewed with the cold eye of recent surveys, and as a positive means of moral training, would seem to be something of a fraud—to condemn it in terms of its own language, “a wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

Ideally suited in many ways for easy comprehension by the child mind, the fable has long held a position second only to Bible stories and the Catechism as a stimulating influence in the development of moral judgment in the young. Generation after generation has listened with what was hoped was eager attention to the accounts of what happened to the frustrated fox, to the greedy goose, and the hare who was over-confident. Was it only the fond pedagogical illusion of the times that character thus was built and moral standards inculcated? Careful studies lately undertaken and completed by educators reveal that actually the fable has little, if any, appreciable influence on a child’s moral sense, no matter how its teaching is presented. Does this mean that the fable must go?

Let us trace what is known of the history of this interesting literary form. The earliest definite knowledge of the fable places it back at least three thousand

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years, and there is no reason to suppose it was new then. It was Eastern in origin, conceived in the subtle Oriental mind as a guileful means of teaching fundamental truths to a story-loving people. Fables flourished in Persia where the storyteller unrolled his mat in the marketplace and spread delicate satire against ruling despots with tales of animal characters having similar traits.

In ancient Greece Aesop’s famous fables were considered as philosophical rather than literary gems and were told by the tunic-clad disciples of Socrates and Plato. La Fontaine, French exponent of the form, gave it new adornment with a light touch and a sprightly wit. John Gay, English poet, turned the fable into verse. George Ade, American humorist, humanized it with a contemporary viewpoint and phraseology. Each nationality took the essential form, clothed it in its national dress, and adapted it to its own needs; but it is with the fables of Aesop and La Fontaine that educators today are chiefly concerned, and it is these fables which were used as the basis of a study by the writer.¹

What is a fable, and why has it always been considered so well adapted to the curricula of elementary schools? A fable is composed of two elements, a story and a moral. The story illustrates a moral, and the moral is made memorable by the story. The style is short, precise, and simple, telling the story vividly in the fewest possible words. The characters

¹ “The Place of the Fable in Moral Education.” Doctoral dissertation, New York University, June, 1936.

are animals, because as such they obviate description. The lion, the fox, the hare, all have the same meaning to minds of all levels, and give complete characterization in a word. They lend color and liveliness and natural simplicity to the narrative and make it easily applicable to daily life. Brief and simple enough to hold youthful interest, and designed to make a definite point, the fable demonstrates immediate results of good and bad conduct in a way that life does not.

The fable has been universally used in primary schools throughout the nation for generations as a helpful means of inculcating moral values through graphic presentation. The New York City Board of Education Syllabus for elementary schools sets as its standard for literature that which is capable of developing correct attitudes towards life and "of developing high ideals of character and conduct, both personal and civic." The Literature Syllabus includes thirty-seven fables for teaching in its 2-A to 4-B grades. Elementary school teachers, in a questionnaire sent to 2,118 of their number by the writer, expressed an overwhelming approval of the fable as an instrument in teaching moral values, and added further endorsement of its reputation for ethical weight.

However, the writer's study of the moral influences of the fable produced some very enlightening results, which seem to contradict the popular opinion. Children who had become familiar with fables were tested on their comprehension of the rewards and punishments which were the fruits of the characters' behavior. Even additional training and a second test failed to reveal any definite improvement in moral judgment as a result of learning the fables. Any gains were so slight as to have no real significance.

The test was divided into two sections. The first was composed of twenty-nine situations based on the twenty-five selected fables, reflecting the everyday life of the child, with two, three, or four alternatives listed, of which the correct one was intended to be checked by the children tested. The second part of the test consisted of twenty true-false questions, based on the expressed or implied morals of the same fables.

The test was administered twice to the 402 children. The first time the test was given without any preliminary work with the fable. During the time intervening between the first and the second administering of the test, class work with the fable was presented to the experimental group. This group heard the fable read, reproduced the story orally, stated the moral, and then related, from their own lives, experiences similar to the experience of the fable situation. No preliminary work was done with the control group. Following this class work with the fable, the same test material was given a second time to the children.

The tests also covered the two debated methods of teaching fables — that in which the children listen to and discuss the fable, and that in which they simply listen to the fable and reproduce it. There was no appreciable advantage apparent from either technique. Nor was there any apparent relation between intelligence and moral judgment in the children's reactions. Groups having lower Intelligence Quotients seemed to do quite as well as those with higher, thus upsetting the view held by many educators and social workers that people of superior intelligence are superior morally. One survey does not, of course, prove anything conclusively, yet it nevertheless has significance and lays a foundation for future research along this line.

These findings are all more or less negative in character, but they nevertheless point to several positive conclusions. Fables must be selected on the basis of suitability for the grade level in which they are to be placed. Some of the fables frequently taught in schools offer so much difficulty to the child that no moral effect and very little moral training can be derived from them. Others are sufficiently simple and free from confusion as to be definitely within the comprehension of the 4-A and 4-B child. Among these are "The Grasshopper and the Ant," "The Old Man and His Sons," "The Lark and Her Young Ones," "The Wind and the Sun," and "The Swallow and the Raven." Others, such as "The Frog and the Ox," "The Shepherd's Boy," "The Mice in Council," and "The Miller, His Son and Their Ass" are definitely not suited to these grades.

Such factors and their implications have important bearing on curriculum building in elementary schools of the future and particularly in the branch of education usually designated as character education. Wider study of grade levels for specific fables would be of great advantage. It would also be interesting to discover whether, lacking direct moral effect, fables still have a carry-over value into everyday life.

However unavailing it may be as a builder of moral concepts, there is still a useful place for the fable in elementary school literature. The action, interest and dramatic appeal are stimulating to the child's creative imagination, and familiarity with the characters and stories which are known to nearly everyone forms an integral part of literary knowledge and cultural background. Fables may be used effectively in other branches of class activity with the double purpose of enriching the activities and also, if possible,

presenting the moral message of the story more forcefully. As a basis for dramatization, they add color and interest to reading and speech classes, or can be chosen as the subjects for simple rhymes. In drawing, fable characters may be used as models for illustration. Observing the children's interpretations of the fables as expressed in other activities gives the teacher a better opportunity to judge what conceptions of right or wrong have been received.

No single study, of course, can be said to furnish conclusive evidence. The group studied is necessarily small, and the situation a single unit, not an actual cross-section of life. For example, it is possible that the morals and stories of the fables linger in memory on into adulthood, and take on a meaning in later life that was lacking at the time they were first heard. The recent surveys indicate that the influence of the fable in the past has been over-rated, but there is still much experimentation to be done before its use in the teaching of children in the field of moral education can be fully determined. But whether the fable stands or fails as a factor in character development, its intrinsic interest and rich cultural background will continue to play an important part in literature for children and in the affectionate memories of adults.

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Children's Choices Of Reading Material

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FOR THE MOST PART, teachers accept the reading lists provided by librarians, reading specialists and psychologists because they feel that they have been based upon scientific studies of children's interests, and are therefore a sound basis for the selection of books for the class room library. Occasionally, however, teachers become curious in regard to the books that they know children read outside the school room. The *Winnetka Graded Book List* states "One series of books which was read and liked by 900 children was unanimously voted trashy by the librarians," and "out of 800 books submitted to them, three-fourths of the librarians felt that 100 were unsuitable or trashy."

Teachers realize that these are probably the stories that their pupils read when not under their watchful eyes, but often do not know just what the books are. Many would be willing to experiment with these "outcast" books if they knew what children honestly preferred. It was in the hope that some of these open-minded instructors would carry on investigations that the following brief research was undertaken.

Sixty college seniors, who had not yet had any practice teaching or courses in methods of teaching reading or literature, were asked to find out from any source except books or reading lists what children in the first six grades read voluntarily. Suggestions were made, but the students were free to consult anyone who could be expected to have had first hand

experience with children's reading except teachers. They were omitted because many of them are required to use books not of their own selection.

The students visited branch libraries and received the cooperation of the librarians, but these findings are not included because the books named were those that may be found in the lists given in the bibliography at the close of this article. They were books that conformed to the high standards set by scientific investigations; books that were read by children who procure their books at libraries, either with or without the advice of librarians in charge of the children's room.

Replies of parents who were interviewed reflected the cultural background of the home and agreed with the study made by Lazar who found a substantial correlation between the books in the home and the socio-economic status.

The students accosted children who were reading or examining books or magazines in stores, on door steps or any place they were observed. One student wrote, "I saw some boys in a second-hand magazine store so I went in. Some boys were choosing old magazines that were two for a nickel. I spoke to three of them and they said, 'There are good murder stories and westerns in these.' The boys were eleven and twelve years of age. One of them said, 'You can read quite a lot while you pretend to be buying some, if you get a couple once in a while.'"

Here is a statement from another student. "I find from personal experience

that some of the little girls I teach in Sunday School can't wait until the lesson is over to peek at their funny papers that they bring with them, although I try to watch and keep them until class is over. They like them better than the papers the church supplies."

Many of the students went to the five and ten cent stores to discover what the children bought. Every sales girl gave replies similar to the following.

"The best sellers are the 'Big Little Books,' and the 'Little Big Books' such as:

<i>Dick Tracy</i>	<i>Shirley Temple Books</i>
<i>Buck Rogers</i>	<i>Charlie McCarthy</i>
<i>Arizona Kid</i>	<i>Flash Gordon</i>
<i>Jungle Stories</i>	<i>Terry and the Pirates</i>
<i>Mickey Mouse</i>	<i>Tom Mix</i>
<i>Donald Duck</i>	<i>The Plainsman</i>
<i>Tarzan</i>	<i>Little Orphan Annie</i>
<i>G-Men</i>	<i>Lone Ranger</i> "

"Joke books are popular with children of all ages, but especially with children of about nine to eleven years of age."

"The little ones like picture books of trains and farm animals. Comic books that sell especially well are *Winnie Winkle*, *Popeye the Sailor*, and others like them."

Few boys and girls have enough money to purchase the books recommended for them, but can buy these books and the magazines that are similar in nature. The following quotation is typical of many.

"One news stand dealer told me that in order to meet the demand for *Dick Tracy*, *Flash Gordon* and *Tim Tyler's Luck* he had to keep them on constant order, for boys between seven and ten bought them as fast as he could get them."

The magazines enjoyed were the twenty-three weekly and comic periodicals which continue the adventures of the daily and Sunday funny paper characters.

Besides these, *Boys Life*, *The American Boy*, sport and adventure magazines and *Popular Mechanics* were liked by the boys. The girls chose *True Story*, *True Confessions* and the movie magazines. These were liked from the age of eleven and up. Younger children of both sexes bought *Child Life* and *Mickey Mouse*.

Books in series, such as *The Bobbsy Twins*, *The Motor-boat Boys*, *Campfire Girls*, *Bomba*, *Ruth Fielding*, *The Cowboy Girls* and *The Hardy Boys* were sold in large numbers to children.

One enterprising girl telephoned the largest book store in town and found that the most popular books were as follows:

Age 8-10

The Bobbsy Twins
Honey Bunch
Bunny Brown and Sister Sue
Alladdin
Snow White
Robinson Crusoe
Gulliver's Travels
Arabian Nights

Age 10-13

Evangeline
Man Without A Country
 and those mentioned under *Series*.

Other book stores gave similar lists, with the first two choices appearing upon each report. Salesmen in book shops said that from the ages of seven to twelve, fairy tales were most popular, and from twelve to sixteen, mystery, adventure, travel, romance, and invention were sold in the order named, with few boys selecting stories that had any romance. *Dick Merrill* is the favorite of thirteen-year-old boys.

Books that feature recent popular motion pictures always sell well, such as *Snow White*, *Heidi*, *Captains Courageous*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Little Women*, *Wells Fargo*, *The Buccaneer*.

These editions are preferred by many children because of the pictures which duplicate the film stills. Other popular books were "gag" books of radio comedians.

Compare these preferences of boys and girls with studies that have been made and it will be found that while children appear to care little about literary style, they enjoy dramatic action, humor, and adventure whether it occurs in picture books, comic or other magazines, or in books of any type.

Much time and effort has been expended by those who have attempted to teach children to read materials in which they had little or no interest. In spite of the fact that the schools have not sanctioned the books of the type described, the children continue to read them, as they seem to satisfy a craving in a way that basal and supplementary texts do not.

A superior attitude toward the reading taste of the pupils does not appear to have altered their preferences, but rather to have caused them to distrust the good judgment of adults. Few teachers read the comic strips that children enjoy, nor

approve of them, yet Lehman found that reading the Sunday funny paper is the one activity engaged in by 98 per cent of all children of elementary school age.

Let us be honest with ourselves. Probably many of us once read books considered trashy by our teachers or parents, but we outgrew them. If we provide the children with a well balanced diet of literature, it is not likely that they will be any more harmed by a bit of slapstick humor than they are by a piece of candy which follows a hygienic dinner of spinach and beef steak. The only warning is to be sure that the green vegetables are provided as well as the sweets.

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THE FABLE IN CHARACTER EDUCATION

(Continued from page 225)

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Predicting Reading Difficulty of Selections for Children*

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EDUCATORS INTERESTED in the education of adults and of children are concerned with the problem of estimating the readability of texts, of supplementary sources of information, and of the literatures that are deemed necessary for the well informed man or child. If readability of a passage could be evaluated adequately, the estimate would have two major values—one, placing the book on some scale of comprehensibility, the other, indicating to writers of books for specified populations, the nature of the difficulty of their product. With an estimate of the difficulty of a book or passage, and a knowledge of the intellectual maturity of the reader, a better reconciliation of means to the end of a well-informed laity may be made. With a knowledge of the sources of difficulty in a passage, and with an estimate of the kind of people the passage is directed towards, books may be written that will fulfill such an intention.

One criterion for readability is its comprehensibility, or negatively, its difficulty on a scale of comprehension.

It is the purpose of this paper to report work on the estimation of difficulty of reading passages. We shall see that the criterion for comprehension has not yet been defined with sufficient rigor. Nevertheless, we shall also see that the most significant indicator or predictor of pass-

age difficulty will be some function of the vocabulary used. In the range of materials evaluated, vocabulary load is the most important concomitant of difficulty.

From about 1923, many investigators have interested themselves in the problem of predicting the difficulty of reading passages as a function of the internal structure of the reading passage. Among the variables of internal structure that have been considered, the following have been used more or less frequently: number of running words, number or percentage of different words, number or percentage of uncommon or hard words, number or percentage of polysyllabic words, vocabulary difficulty, vocabulary diversity, number of personal pronouns, number of prepositions, number of simple sentences, average sentence length in words or syllables, number of ideas per hundred words, and the like.

The criterion of difficulty has been reading ability (as measured by the paragraph reading score on the Stanford Achievement Test) of children who reported that they had read and liked certain books. Such a criterion was used by Vogel and Washburne (1928) and by Washburne and Morphett (1938), or the reading comprehension score of adults as measured by specially devised reading tests for adults. The second criterion was used by Dale and Tyler (1934) and Gray and Leary (1935).

The method of approach has been relatively simple. For each passage or book, some criterion score of reading

*Read before the American Association for the advancement of Science, Section Q, December 29, 1938, in Richmond, Virginia.

Acknowledgment is made to the Readability Laboratory of Teachers College, Columbia University, for a partial grant-in-aid, and to personnel made available to project 665-97-36 sub 12, under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration.

ability has been assigned. Then for each such passage a quantitative analysis of internal structure was made in terms of several variables. After these measures has been tabulated, then, by correlational procedure, empirical formulae were developed to predict reading difficulty.

Gray and Leary in "What Makes a Book Readable" present such a formula for predicting reading difficulty of adult reading materials, using as criterion the average reading score for each of 48 passages, and as variables of internal structure, the number of different hard words, number of personal pronouns, average sentence length, percentage of different words, and number of prepositional phrases. The empirical formula yields a predicted difficulty score which correlates with the obtained difficulty score to the extent of .645.

In order to apply the Gray and Leary technic to children's reading, and to obtain a measure of reading difficulty in terms of grade scores, a study was made of the predictability of grade scores for the 376 selections included in McCall and Crabbs: *Standard Test Lessons in Reading*, Book II, III, IV, V. Each passage in each of the books is normed on the basis of the number of questions correctly answered in terms of Thorndike-McCall Reading Scale scores. In order to designate a criterion score for each passage, an investigation was made of the acceptability of three criteria. The three criteria were the grade score, if the person could only answer one-fourth, or only one-half, or three-quarters of the questions for each passage. The intercorrelations between grade score for one-half and grade score for one-quarter questions was .94; for one-half against three-quarters, .96; and for one-quarter against three-quarters, .85. On the basis of this analysis, the criterion value used through-

out the rest of the work was the grade score for a person who could answer just one-half of the questions correctly.

Using the same structural elements as Gray and Leary used, a study was made of the intercorrelations among structural elements and criteria for a random sample of 120 paragraphs and for the total sample of 376 paragraphs. Those intercorrelations are given in Table I. It should be added that one additional variable was used, namely the weighted index of word difficulty which was obtained by giving each word in the passage a weight for its frequency of occurrence according to Thorndike's *20,000 Word Book*, and dividing by the number of words. On the basis of these intercorrelations, several multiple correlations are obtainable.

Using Thorndike's weighted index, number of prepositional phrases, per cent of different words, average sentence length, number of different hard words, and number of personal pronouns, the multiple correlation is .7722 (Table III). A multiple correlation eliminating the number of personal pronouns is .7721. Further, eliminating per cent of different words, the multiple correlation is .7711. And even further, eliminating the Thorndike weighted index, the multiple correlation is .7669. On the basis of only prepositional phrases and number of different hard words, the multiple correlation is .7456. On the basis of only average sentence length and number of different hard words the multiple correlation is .7406. On the basis of only number of prepositional phrases and average sentence length the multiple correlation is .6949. Every multiple here reported is higher than that reported by Gray and Leary. In addition to a better prediction, based on a larger sample of passages, the several available formulae

give a prediction in terms of grade scores on some fairly well established reading scale.

A further study was made of the relationship of the Gray and Leary predicted reading index and the criterion adopted for this study as well as for the other two criteria, one-quarter and three-quarter grade scores. The correlations were $-.5469$, $-.5726$, and $-.5506$ respectively for C_{25} , C_{50} , and C_{75} . These correlations indicate that although the Gray and Leary index and the grade scores have some relationship, factors such as the reliability of the criteria, validity of the criteria, extent of sampling and the like vitiate intercomparisons.

Another study was made of the correlation between the predicted Gray and Leary scores for the passages, and the predicted Gray and Leary scores for the questions on the passages, yielding a correlation of $.6156$. This correlation may be interpreted as evidence that there are factors in the passage which are unrelated to factors in the structure of the questions.

In conjunction with the Readability Laboratory of Teachers College, Columbia University, Elizabeth C. Morris and Dorothy Holversen developed an "Idea Analysis Technique" for estimating the difficulty of passages. Their variables are based upon the kinds of words used in the passage. The variables are:

Classification I, simplest word labels representing fundamental or elemental experiences in the life of a people in a given culture such as "father," "water," "home," etc.

Classification II deals with words also learned early in life which differ from Classification I in being word-ideas which are localisms, such as "corn," "plow," "cattle," etc.

Classification III deals with words signifying concrete ideas, such as "filament," "Van Gogh," "Iraq," etc.

Classification IV deals with words signifying abstractness, quality, states of mind, such as "platitudes," "torrid," "intellectuality."

Using the four classifications of content words, as well as the percentage of all content words to the total number of words in the passage, the intercorrelations among the structural elements and the criteria of difficulty were computed.

The multiple correlation using classification I, III, and IV, was $.7419$. Adding average sentence length raised it to $.7762$, and further adding number of prepositional phrases raised it to $.7815$, and adding to that composite number of different hard words, raised the multiple correlation to $.7821$.

It seems reasonable to conclude that reading difficulty is a difficult criterion to define. Up to now, there is lack of agreement as to what kind of reading should be evaluated for reading difficulty either on the child or adult level. There is a definite need for a clarification of the concept of reading difficulty. Nevertheless, the most significant predictor of reading difficulty is some function of the vocabulary used. The idea analysis procedure indicates that relative commonness or rarity of words is not nearly as valuable as giving some weight to the meaning involved in the vocabulary used. The idea analysis technique gives a first approximation to the significance of meanings of words. It is hoped that the Lorge and Thorndike count of the frequency of occurrence of words by their meanings in "A Semantic Count of English Words" will enable more critical evaluation of the importance of meaning in reading difficulty.

It should be pointed out that after vo-

PREDICTING READING DIFFICULTY

233

TABLE III

Regression weights for specified standard scores of variables predicting criterion C50: After Gray and Leary pattern: Based on total samples of 376 passages from McCall-Crabbs Test Lessons in Reading.

Th.	.1363	.1369	.1206	.....	.....	.....	.....
8	.2392	.2345	.2397	.2461	.3733	.3121	.....
7	.0220	.0305	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
6	.2266	.2281	.2341	.2346	.4237	.....	.3124
2	.3208	.3154	.3366	.4268	.....	.5322	.5102
5	.0157	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
R	.7722	.7721	.7711	.7669	.6949	.7456	.7406

TABLE IV

Regression weights for specified standard scores of variables predicting criterion C50: Morris and Holverson Idea Analysis Technique: Based on a random sample of 120 passages from McCall-Crabbs Test Lessons in Reading.

IV	.2912	.3059	.3191	.3656
III	.1776	.1881	.1932	.2755
I	— .2418	— .2529	— .2648	— .3319
8	.0946	.0988	.....	.....
6	.2501	.2571	.2764	.....
2	.0455	.....	.....	.....
R	.7821	.7815	.7762	.7419

TABLE V

Intercorrelations among criteria of difficulty and Gray and Leary predicted scores for passage, and for questions on passage: Based on a random sample of 120 passages from McCall-Crabbs Test Lessons in Reading.

	C25	C75	GLP	GLQ	X	Sigma
C50	.9416	.9562	— .5469	— .4506	5.6671	1.6499
C25		.8538	— .5726	— .4824	4.2520	1.1605
C75			— .5506	— .4492	7.5331	2.5843
GLP				.6156	.9445	.3387
GLQ					1.1085	.3333

Vocabulary Problems in the Elementary School

A Digest of Current Research

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(Continued from May)

Important in the investigation of vocabulary is a group of studies derived from consideration of children's letters. Cox (44), investigating the vocabulary of third grade children, analyzed 332 letters spontaneously written outside of school, secured 32,007 running words, 2120 different words. Of these 1805 were found in Horn's list, 70% in the first 5000, 15% in the second 5000. About 15% were not found at all in the adult list. It is significant to note that over 80% of the words in Horn's list, 72% of those in his first 5000, did not appear in this list derived from children's letters. Comparing his list with Grace McKee's list of 1475 Cox found 862 words common to both, 1258 in his list but not in Mrs. McKee's, 613 in Mrs. McKee's but not in his.

Cox concluded that a list of words used commonly and frequently by adults will include most of the words used frequently by children; that a list used frequently by children does not include a majority of the words so used by adults; that important theme investigations have not determined a child's important writing vocabulary. This study is manifestly limited but it seems quite significant.

Sharp (200) in a similar study employing 504 letters written spontaneously outside school by children in eighteen states, Canada, and Mexico, came to similar conclusions. Riddle (185) examined 426 letters written by 5000 grade children ranging in age from eight to thirteen, from thirty-two states. Riddle found

that of the 5430 running words and 2879 different words tabulated, 409 were not reported by Horn's list, 1969 were found in Horn's first 5000, 501 in the second, while 7530 words in the adult list, 3031 in the first 5000 were not in this list. Over 64% of these words were not in Mrs. McKee's theme list. Riddle concluded that a list of words used most frequently by adults includes nearly all of the words so used by children, but that if one teaches only the words used by children he will exclude many words used frequently by adults. Further, that words found commonly in themes include many words used relatively infrequently. Combining the children's usage with studies of adult usage seems most practical.

Hunter (108) contributed a study of fifth grade children's letters, Hoffman (98) of sixth grade, Simpson (202) and Burdine (27) of several grades, coming to the same general conclusions.

Fitzgerald (69) collected from school systems in many states and some foreign countries 3784 letters of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children. He secured 461,321 running words, 7340 different words. He reported a list of 2106 words occurring eight times or more. Of these, 2000 were used in letters of all three grades. All except 6 were used in the sixth, 20 in the fifth, 99 in the fourth. These 2106 words and their repetitions made up about 97% of the running words. One of the important features of this study is the spontaneous source material.

A very intensive study of this type was conducted by Francis (75). The purpose was to make a frequency and grade comparison of words written in children's letters, also to study the misspellings. Francis compiled a list of 4332 different words. Homonyms formed a large portion of the children's vocabulary. Contractions increased from grade to grade. The children used antonyms which denoted positive or pleasant feelings rather than those which indicated negative or unpleasant states. Children use monosyllables or dissyllables much more frequently than they use polysyllables. Only 27 words with three or more syllables were found ten times or more. The present tense was used more frequently than the past and the past tenses more frequently than the future. Play contributed more words than word, study, and sleep combined. Interest in things seen was manifest. Francis reports a dearth of color adjectives, adverbs, and richness of expression in general.

Smith (205) in an analysis of the papers written by elementary school children in connection with all subjects studied, concluded that children use a larger writing vocabulary than had been supposed.

Fitzgerald (70) compared the 100 words of widest frequency in the Horn list, Ashbaugh's high school list, and Fitzgerald's elementary school list. He reported a large overlap in the three vocabularies, but significant differences in the marginal and infrequently used words.

It may be noted further that Dolch (56), in his study of a graded vocabulary of 9583 words, found that about half the words are in other studies grading words by children's usage, about one-fourth are more frequently derived from adult writing or printed matter. About

one-fourth could not be found in any other study.

The following studies employ different approaches.

A very extensive investigation was conducted by Buckingham and Dolch (25, 26) to determine as nearly as possible what words children from grades two through grade eight know. Children were told to write, in fifteen minutes, as many words as they could think of. Over 2000 children from widely distributed areas submitted nearly two and a half million running words. In the tabulation, irregular inflectional forms were separated. Proper names, abbreviations, contractions, archaic and poetic forms were omitted. On the basis of probable vocabulary development, experience with children in the grades, and analyses of other studies of both written and spoken vocabularies, the authors suggested a grade by grade vocabulary of some 19,000 words. Dolch previously reported a comparative study of many word lists.

Cooper (42), in a city-wide investigation which employed over 37,000 compositions written by the same number of Minneapolis public school children, assigned ten selected topics to ten equated districts. Cooper's interests were primarily in spelling, but the conclusions are of general interest. Cooper says lists of misspellings derived from previous studies are not completely and generally useful. He also demonstrates that elementary school children's needs transcend the list based on adult writing, and that a supplementary list derived from his study would be a useful addition to any spelling list available.

Commenting upon the combined word list of Buckingham and Dolch, Dolch (58) says:

It was to correct this situation that a combined word list was compiled. This combined list was

planned to offer, conveniently assembled in one alphabetical list, the 19,000 words in eleven of the best known word lists. Proper names, contractions, and abbreviations were not included. When these were dropped from the Thorndike list of 20,000 there were only 17,890 words remaining, and these were included in the 19,000 of the combined list. The assumption was that, with this combined word list in hand, one need not go elsewhere to look up the data on a word. After each word letters and numbers would show all the lists containing the word and the grade or frequency placement given in each list. The compilers found a highly condensed arrangement possible.

Many interesting side lights were thrown upon related questions as the work of compilation progressed. A chart of the probable vocabulary development of the average child, based upon a summary of numerous studies, showed that children enter school knowing the meaning of about 2,000 words. From then on the yearly increases might be estimated as follows:

Grade I	800
Grade II	800
Grade III	900
Grade IV	900
Grade V	1,000
Grade VI	1,100
Grade VII	1,200
Grade VIII	1,300

Children's word knowledge is changing year by year. The children's world is expanding in many directions. It is expanding geographically. With the use of the automobile, children travel about the country with their parents and are acquiring the vocabulary of travel, of camping, and of description of places in a way heretofore impossible. The children's world is expanding in the field of books—books which they are learning to read more rapidly, with better understanding, and at an earlier age than ever before. The children's world is expanding technically. Adult trades and occupations, adult tools and machinery, adult knowledge of the world of things and of work, all are being brought closer to children. Children are being initiated into the world of adult ideas and relations. The motion picture and the radio are perhaps responsible for this more than any other agencies. In addition, the attitude of parents is changing, and there is less disposition to suppress the curiosity of childhood. All this expansion of the child's world means an expansion of the child's vocabulary, and word lists must be kept up to date.

One of the most valuable features of the work was the gaps revealed in the master list. No list which went into the compilation had *bass drum*,

and only one had *bathtub*. These and many other common compounds do not appear because many studies divide compounds and list the parts separately. But other words that one might look for are missing. *Demoting* of pupils did not appear. . . Two of the commonest flavors of chewing gum, *spear-mint* and *wintergreen*, are not included. There was no *borebound* candy. People ate neither *tenderloin* nor *croquettes*. Neither did they have *succotash*, *slaw*, *lima beans*, nor *endive*.

A general vocabulary should probably reflect city conditions, but just for that reason we need a supplementary listing of words which the farm children learn earlier than city children, if not also a list of the words they learn later.

Attention must be called to the fact that the gradings given by the various studies . . . occasionally disagree very much. Here is a situation deserving considerable study. It can sometimes be understood if one considers the conditions under which the particular lists were made.

Waldron (239) studied the words used by some 1500 children in the first grades of a number of city schools during free activity periods both in the school and on the playground. Of course many words used could not be recorded, and the experiment covered only one week. 12,809 different words were tabulated. Of 350 most frequently used, 207 were in the Gates list (82).

Leyman (130) reports a study of the vocabulary of three children of pre-school age, each from a different family and different locality. Words used by the children during daily conversations were recorded. The average age of the children was 54 months and the average vocabulary 1916 words. Obviously an experiment so limited in scope can in no sense be considered conclusive but it is interesting to note that the average primer vocabulary is much less than the number of words used by these children in speaking, and even more disparity is noted between primer vocabularies and the International Kindergarten List (109).

Madeline Horn (105) and Madora Smith (206, 207) show that without doubt children who enter school use

many more words than they can reasonably be taught to spell in the primary grades.

A series of studies conducted at the University of Oklahoma under the guidance of Henry D. Rinsland (186) on the vocabulary of children in grades one, two, three, and six both inside and outside of school, pointed out many discrepancies between words used by these children and established lists.

Stoneburner (216) studied the vocabulary of six year old pre-school children. He compared the vocabulary of these children with Thorndike's word list and the vocabulary of some primers. Five children from different types of homes were included. The method was similar to that employed by Leyman but conversation was stimulated by means of pictures. In the tabulation all inflected forms were included but original coined words and concocted compounds were omitted. The children used a combined total of 3478 words, 1944 common to all. The words found in primers with which Stoneburner compared these findings were all found in this list. The primer total vocabulary included 12.5% of the common speaking vocabulary. Most of the words in the common speaking vocabulary were in the first 5000 words of the Thorndike list.

Galter (78) compiled from words suggested by 7000 children in grades one to six a list worthy of special drill. Two thousand six hundred and sixty-nine different words were suggested by the pupils. Galter found from grade to grade proportionately more words from the third, fourth, and fifth thousand than from the first and second thousand. He lists words useful for vocabulary study in the several grades.

Rinsland (186) is just concluding a tremendously extensive study with the

assistance of a W. P. A. grant. The analysis involved 96,784 different compositions (270,000 pages of writing, over 6,000,000 running words) from children in city and rural schools all over the United States. The publication plans involve a list of some 15,000 different words with eight columns of frequencies for the eight grades after each word.

Fry (77) studied conversations of first grade children in school, Trent (233) the same outside of school, Taylor (221) the vocabulary of children in grade six. Fry and Trent listened to conversations of pupils and recorded with pencil and paper the words used. No pictures were used. The children were from the University of Oklahoma Elementary School, of average intelligence, and with good home backgrounds. Fry found 54,610 running words, 2500 different words used by first grade children in school. He found considerable disagreement between his list and those of Horn and Thorndike. Only 222 of the first 500 of Fry's words are included in Horn's first 500. Trent used only 62 pupils, finding a total of 90,770 running words, 3941 different words. Two or more words which reported one concept, such as *ice-cream cone*, were listed as one word. Trent's findings agree closely with Fry's. Taylor and Bennett in the respective grades mentioned, asked children to write all the words they could think of in 100 minutes of writing time. Taylor used about 300 pupils in 50 schools, Bennett 101 pupils in 16 schools. In Taylor's study second grade children used 18,899 running words, 2141 different words; third grade 35,295 running words, 4467 different words. Bennett lists 51,427 running words, 2482 different words. That these children used more words than those reported by Dolch is probably due to the time limit observed. These studies, as

well as Fry's and Trent's, show closer agreement with Thorndike's list than with Horn's, and all agree more closely with the International Kindergarten List.

A very useful study is that of Madeline Horn. She gathered 489,555 running words by free associations from children in various kindergartens throughout the country. There were included 7086 words; inflectional forms and original coined words were tabulated separately. The thousand words used most frequently constitute a very useful list.

Uhrbrook (236) secured Ediphone recordings of the words most frequently used by a five year old girl in her conversations during six weeks preceding her sixth birthday. She used 24,000 running words, 1933 different words. Strictly interpreted these different words could be reduced to 1457. There was no stimulus given the child; she merely talked as she pleased.

Shambaugh and Shambaugh (198, 199) tried to discover words more important in the daily vocabulary of the elementary school child and to examine those words as to their expression of fundamental necessities. Four hundred stimulus words were selected. They took the words from no established list, but attempted to introduce: (a) words that come vividly into the daily life of the child; (b) those that touch a large number of phases of childhood life; (c) those that pertain to experience fundamental in the development of man; (d) those that include name words, action words, and modifiers. Dividing these into eight lists of 50 words each, they submitted the words to pupils in grades four to eight selected from eleven elementary schools in California and Oregon. No more than one group of pupils in each grade responded to each list of 50 words. Actually 1851 pupils were employed. The pupils

responded in writing to each stimulus word with four or five words each associated with it. The study produced 230,631 total running words, 4515 different words, 1309 common to all grades. There were 98 words with a frequency of 500 or more, only 61 of these were found in Thorndike's first 500. Nine were not in Horn's list. The authors conclude that a majority of the fourth grade words used applied to the experience and life of the child, that the words of high frequency are those concerned with fundamental experiences, and that there is a marked difference between words most largely associated with life and commonly used word lists.

Oberman (160) used objects and pictures rather than words as stimuli, having 1103 pupils from grades three to eight write two themes or more upon topics suggested by pictures or objects. Many words not included in lists with which the author compared her findings appear in her tabulations. Her conclusions are that none of the studies of children's themes has indicated the range of children's written vocabulary and that varying stimuli would produce many more words. However, neither in this study nor in the Shambaugh study is there clear evidence that the marginal vocabulary indicated is of sufficient use in general writing to warrant including those words in spelling lists.

A study conducted by Jakeman (110) comparing oral and written vocabularies is significant not only because of its findings but because of the method. The data were obtained from two oral and two written compositions composed by each of 79 pupils in the University of Iowa Elementary School. The compositions varied in length from 89 to 1345 words in the oral, and from 45 to 484 words in the written compositions. The

total number of running words was 56,464 for the oral, 27,352 for the written. Two educational films were used as stimuli. The oral compositions were recorded electrically. Groups of ten children were employed successively. First the story was read and then the children were shown the picture. After this the children were divided into two groups one writing the compositions, the other giving oral compositions in a room in which a recording device was concealed. When the second picture was shown the order was reversed. In tabulating the words individual comparisons were undertaken. There were 2262 different words, 1156 were common to both vocabularies and were words of high frequency. There were 727 words used only

in the oral, 379 only in the written compositions. Jakeman pointed out that the children used more than twice as many running words in oral compositions as in written; that the extent of vocabulary, used to talk about the situation was larger than that used in writing about it; and that there was a large overlap and the words common to both seemed not to be of peculiar significance.

Rahja (181) comparing three studies of the vocabulary of themes written by elementary school children with Mrs. Ernest Horn's study of the vocabulary of kindergarten children, pointed out the difficulty of studying children's spoken vocabularies. Rahja found more differences than those reported by Jakeman.

(To be continued)

CHILDREN'S GROWTH IN READING

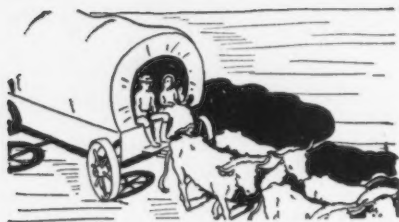
(Continued from page 222)

check revealed a lesser number of this type being read and a definite trend toward more preferable books.

Most of the outside reading was done in the middle grades. These children also read more informational books than those in the lower grades. Most significant of all was the reading growth of these fourth grade children who had carried on the library activity. They consistently showed improvement in the choices of books as well as an increase in the amount read. Before the Book Week activity, 17 desirable books were read; in later checks from this room the numbers reported were, respectively, 30, 43,

and 64 desirable books. The library habit will always be reliable insurance that good books will be read. The librarian later reported that this group of children made greater and more intelligent use of the children's department than any other one group in the city. Even outside testimony verified the success the school had achieved in stimulating reading and library usage!

Through the entire year the most important, most potent and most lasting influences in this reading program were the intangible factors—the interest and the selective forces growing within the children themselves.



All the Days Were Antonia's. By Gretchen McKown and Florence Stebbins Gleeson. Viking.

With The Fall Books for Boys and Girls

AMERICAN HISTORY IN FICTION

All the Days Were Antonia's. By Gretchen McKown and Florence Stebbins Gleeson. Illus. by Zhenya Gay. Viking, 1939. \$2.00.

Both girls and boys will like this story, for it concerns the roaring days of Deadwood, where Antonia's father manages the one bank. Mrs. Gleeson herself lived in Deadwood as a child, and the colorful characters—the "road agents," stage drivers, miners, coolies, Indians—all have the color of authenticity, as well as that of romance. The hardships of frontier life are not minimized. The book is excellent historical material as well as exciting reading.

Adella Mary in Old New Mexico. By Florence Crandell Means. Illus. by Herbert Morton Stoops. Houghton Mifflin, 1939. \$2.00.

The Hoskins children, Adella Mary, Deborah, and Lem, gently reared in St. Louis, go to Taos to visit their mother who is recovering from tuberculosis. Since the year is 1846, the journey is by no means dull. There are the fears of hostile Indians, stampeding buffalo, and storms, and the anxiety aroused by the Mexican War. The picture of life in New Mexico a century ago is exciting, too, for there was rioting against the few Americans in the territory. Nor is this wholly an adventure story. Each of the characters is individualized, and especially Adella Mary, who, naturally timid, conquers her fears again and again for the sake of her brother and sister, and her parents.

Val Rides the Oregon Trail. By Sanford Tousey.

Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran. 1939. \$1.00.

Boys in the middle grades will like this story. Val and his family follow the epic road from Robidoux Landing on the Missouri to the valley of the Willamette in Oregon. Val's special pet is his smart little mule, Jinny, and the simple plot concerns Val's desire to get a Spanish saddle worthy of her. The chronicles of the Oregon Trail are always stirring, including, as they do, treacherous rivers, Indians, buffalo, and deserts. The endpapers are a map of the trail.

Pueblo Jones. By Harry C. Rubican, Jr. Illus. by Sidney E. Fletcher. Knopf. 1939. \$2.00.

Painstaking accuracy and close attention to detail are evident in both text and illustrations. Appended memoranda of the author and artist, each note illustrated, give evidence of the research involved in the book's preparation.

One might fear, on learning of this meticulous documentation, that the story is dull. This is far from the case, for it will delight the most sensation-loving boy. It begins: "The time was the bloody spring of 1864, the place was the territory of Colorado, and the state of affairs was such

that it was practically suicidal for a white man to lay aside his weapons, even for a moment." This gives an idea of the tempo, which does not lag once. Characters, too, are well-drawn. This would appear to be a good book to give to boys who do not ordinarily like to read, for the story would pull them along, irresistibly.



A Book of Fairs. By Helen Augur. Illus. by James MacDonald. Harcourt, Brace.

Winged Feet. By Gertrude Robinson. Illus. by Julian Brazelon. Dutton, 1939. \$2.00.

The story concerns Nathan Snow, and his Indian friend, Squando, who play important roles as scouts for Washington. The book labors through a rather heavy atmosphere of history in the first half, but then warms to the spirit of adventure. Nathan helps in a desperate situation, copying Washington's letters to the Continental Congress, and smuggling powder through to the American army. Well documented. For older boys.

Peter Hale. By Julia Davis. Illus. by Louis Wiesenberg. Dutton, 1939. \$2.00.

This book is notable for the life-like quality of its principal characters.

The time is the early Seventeenth Century. It is the story of young Peter Hale, who crosses to the American colonies alone, after the death of his mother, to live with his uncle in Massachusetts Bay Colony. But Peter unwittingly books passage to Jamestown, and does not, until the end of the story, succeed in finding his mother's brother. In the meantime, he tries to avoid becoming an indentured servant among white families, and in so doing, lives among Indians as an adopted son.

The illustrations have a softness of line that makes them very effective. The author is well-known for her books for children.

BIOGRAPHY, LETTERS, HISTORY

A Book of Fairs. By Helen Augur. Introduction by Hendrik Willem Van Loon. Illus. by James MacDonald. Harcourt Brace, 1939. \$2.50.

It is hardly necessary to say that this history of fairs from the pre-historic times to the World of Tomorrow and Treasure Island is very timely. It is timely in another sense, too, for in a world so disturbed by wars, this book points out the relation between trade and peace, and traces the ancient "fair peace" through many ages and places.

Although a mature book, it is crammed with things children find irresistible—jugglers, contortionists, tight-rope walkers, and circus entertainers—for the story of fairs is interlaced with the story of good times, and the development of our present-day circus and theatre. The volume will be invaluable for social

science reference and class discussion. It is the only history of fairs in English.

Leader by Destiny. George Washington, Man and Patriot. By Jeanette Eaton. Illus. by Jack Manley Rose. Harcourt, Brace, 1938. \$3.00.

Here is a vigorous, quick-moving narrative of the hazardous career of a leader by destiny. Washington lives in these pages, for the reader knows him not only for what he does, but for what he feels and thinks in the perplexing situations that he faces as boy and man, Commander-in-Chief and President. Children have long known Lincoln as a personality, but Washington has seemed remote. Here, though, Miss Eaton makes him a living human being.

As is true of all Jeanette Eaton's books, adequate research furnished the foundation for the well-told tale and authentic biography. There is a good index. The volume is illustrated with attractive soft-toned drawings. It is a book that should be in every school library.

The Young Brontes. By Mary Louise Jarden. Illus. by Helen Sewell. Viking, 1938. \$2.50.

The enormous amount of patient reading and fact-gathering that have gone into the making of this book would alone make it an important publication. If to this be added the interest of the subject, the meagerness of material on this period of the Bronte children's lives, and the author's dissenting point of view, the value of the book is indisputably high.

Miss Jarden takes position that the Brontes' childhood days at the Haworth parsonage were not unhappy, as they are usually pictured, but rich and fruitful. There is little action in the story, for the adventures of the Brontes were imaginary, but characters, setting, and events are vivid, nonetheless.



Pinocchio. By C. Collodi. Illustrated by Esther Friend. Windermere Edition. Rand McNally and Co.

This is a volume that all Bronte lovers will want, and all well-stocked libraries must have. The recently-released picture version of *Wuthering Heights* makes the book of timely interest.

Letters for Children. Compiled by Eva G. Connor. Illus. Macmillan, 1938. \$2.50.

This will appeal more to 'teen-age children than to younger ones, although many of the letters will give youngsters pleasure if read aloud. In addition to the peculiar charm characteristic of letters, many of these have the added grace of playfulness and humor, since they are all addressed to young people. They give life-likeness and reality to many famous names in history and literature with which children will become acquainted as they progress through school.

The letters are genuinely human, and replete with incidents of home life. Franklin writes to a little girl about the death of her pet squirrel. George Sand writes to her son about the giraffe she has seen in the Luxembourg Gardens. Henrietta Maria writes to her son, (later Charles II of England) scolding him for not taking his medicine. So a young reader's first experience with literary folk and historical characters will be casual and human.

The letters are mainly English and American, and are arranged chronologically, beginning with one from Chaucer to his son, and ending with a letter from Walter Hines Page to his infant grandson. There is an impressive bibliography. Portraits of some of the children addressed—ten in all—illustrate the volume.

ANIMALS

Barney of the North.

Written and illus. by Margaret S. Johnson and Helen Lossing Johnson.

Harcourt Brace, 1939. \$1.75

A young Newfoundland dog comes by chance to a northern lumbering camp, is later taken to a country place near New York. He becomes a show-dog, rescues his master twice, and wins the humane society medal. The book will be heavy going for inexperienced readers, and rather dull for anyone who is not a dog-lover. However, the facts concerning the Newfoundland breed are accurate, and Miss Johnson's pictures are unusually appealing.

Reptiles and Amphibians. An Illustrated Natural History. By the Staff of the Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration in the City of New York.

This book is highly praised by such scientists as Roy Chapman Andrews, Raymond Ditmars, and Wil-

lard Van Name of the American Museum of Natural History, for it is scientific and authoritative, many specialists having co-operated in its preparation. It is copiously illustrated, and children from the sixth grade up will find it interesting reading. Dr. Van Name suggests that the book may help to "diminish the unreasonable hostility and the needless persecution of many reptiles." It would be an invaluable addition to school and public libraries.

This is the third in a natural history series, prepared by the Federal Writers' Project.

Lappy in the Forest. By Stera Bosa. Illus. by Glenna Latimer. Dutton, 1939. \$2.00.

Further adventures of Lappy Cushion-Tail, the little rabbit who set out to learn about the forest people and become "a wise and learned rabbit."

The organization is rudimentary. Lappy encounters one animal after another, and interviews each. The language is somewhat pompous and affected—"If only animals could forget to be conceited, the forest would be a much better world for all." The facts themselves are accurate, if uninteresting, but this forest, strangely enough, contains northern creatures such as the beaver and muskrat, and with them, an armadillo! The pictures are attractive.

The Boys' Book of Insects. By Edwin Way Teale. Illus. with photographs and drawings by the author. Dutton, 1939. \$2.00.

The subtitle summarizes the book: "Interesting facts about the lives and habits of the common insects together with simple instructions for collecting, rearing, and studying them." True stories of insects are so fantastic, that a book about them is bound to be exciting. Good

chapters on mounting, collecting with a camera, and bee-keeping. Recommended for libraries.

The Junior Book of Birds. By Roger T. Peterson. Illus. in color. Houghton Mifflin, 1939. \$2.00.

The author is the director of the educational program of the National Association of Audubon Societies. This volume is written in an easy, conversational style that is well-adapted to young readers. Twenty-three birds are discussed, with sympathetic interest. Much information is given—what birds can be seen in the winter, those that return earliest in the spring, what birds eat, how many eggs each kind lays, and so on. There is a full-page colored illustration of each bird discussed, and numerous black and white drawings. A beautiful and useful book.



Val Rides the Oregon Trail. By Sanford Tousey. Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran.

Bat. The Story of a Bull Terrier. By Stephen W. Meader. Illus. by Edward Shenton. Harcourt, Brace, 1939. \$2.00.

Boys and men, especially, will like this excellent story of a dog. The cool intelligence, utter loyalty and fearlessness of the bull terrier make him a fit hero for such a novel. Setting and plot are well worked out, and the story moves along at a good pace.

Let's Go Outdoors. By Harriet E. Huntington. Illus. by Preston Duncan. Doubleday, Doran, 1939. \$2.00.

The text is very simple, and is set in short lines for greater ease in reading. Illustrations are photographs. A few facts are given about creatures that children can find outdoors without much difficulty—snails, bees, daddy-longlegs, dragon flies.

STORY-BOOKS

Mateo and Lolita. By Burr Durfee and Helen and John McMorris. Houghton Mifflin, 1939.

The fascination of old Mexico seems endless, and is felt even in books about the country. This volume (in a school edition here) illustrates a simple narrative of the life of two little Indian children with beautiful photographs. The book would be useful in a school library in many ways: the story itself is interesting, and the factual matter and illustrations provide good supplementary material for geography.

Francie on the Run. By Hilda van Stockum. Illus. by the author. Viking, 1939. \$2.00.

The O'Sullivan family is already known to readers of "The Cottage at Bantry Bay." This is the story of Francie (the author admits that he is her favorite of the family), his flight from the hospital in Dublin across Ireland, and finally home. Francie is a very real little boy, and he wins everyone's heart, including the reader's. There are other quaint and loveable characters in the story, too. The last chapter, telling of Francie's homecoming, and the awkward meeting between Francie and Liam, is masterly. The author knows children thoroughly, and she knows Francie's Ireland just as well. A fine book, and one that children will enjoy.

The Four Funny Men. By Erlin Hogan. Illus. by Inez Hogan. Dutton, 1939. \$1.00.

The author is the eight-year-old niece of Inez Hogan (the author-artist of the Nicodemus books). The writings of precocious children are rarely popular with other children. This is fantasy, almost without plot, and its main distinction is that it was written by a child.

Thomas Retires. By Margaret Van Doren. Illus. by the author. Viking, 1939. \$1.00.

Two little Victorian ladies (the author calls them that) decide that Thomas, a milk horse, must be re-



Donald Duck and His Friends. Told by Jean Ayer. Illus. by the Walt Disney Studio. D. C. Heath, 1939.

tired to a life of idleness because he is old. But Thomas misses the noise and gasoline fumes of the city, and pines sadly in his green pastures. The little ladies are led to see their mistake, and Thomas is restored to his old life. An amusing whimsey.

Where, Oh Where? Story and pictures by Tom Torre Bevans. Viking, 1939.

About a boy named Patrick who wanted a pony very much, and got him, after some sharp dealing. Things didn't turn out exactly as Patrick anticipated, however. Children who enjoy realism will relish this story, for Patrick and his dog, Dirty, are so lifelike that they practically step out of the book and the reader identifies them with the boy down the block. Excellent for the lower grades.

Mule Twins. By Inez Hogan. Illus. by the author. Dutton, 1939. \$1.00.

Everybody knows how funny Miss Hogan's baby animals are, and how loveable the little black boys and girls she draws. Here they are combined, for small dark Sim (already a friend) owns the twin mules. When Miss Hogan's skill, Sim, and mule-nature combine in a book, the reader doesn't need to be told that it is good. It's excellent. It has the pulling power of the "funnies."

The Adventures of Pinocchio. By C. Collodi (Carlo Lorenzini) Illus. by Esther Friend. Rand McNally, Windermere Edition. 1939. \$1.00.

A very good edition, illustrated in bold color and black and white. The print is clear, the paper opaque, the pages well-designed, and the price modest. A good choice for libraries and schools.

A Present for Auntie. By Emma L. Brock. Illus. by the author. Knopf, 1939. \$1.00

The jacket-blurb indicates that Miss Brock intends

this book for the child to read to himself. There is much repetition of words. The story, though, is not in Miss Brock's best vein. First of all, its humor is that of an adult looking at a child. To a youngster, the story will mean merely an endorsement of selfishness and bad manners.

Miss Brock's work is usually so fine that a reader feels an added disappointment in this volume. Another "Hen Who Kept House," or "Runaway Sardine," please, Miss Brock.

Ameliaranne Camps Out. By Constance Howard. Illus. by S. B. Pearse. David McKay. \$1.00.

Ameliaranne has appeared in a number of books, and is known as a loveable and competent little English girl. When Mother Stiggins objects that camping out is not respectable, and objects further that they must have a tent, Ameliaranne arranges everything, and a-camping they go, with the folded tent in Wee William's old pram and Mother Stiggins riding a tricycle. Ameliaranne breaks down all obstacles to a good time—Lord Siddybottom's "No Hikers—No Camping" rule, and the policeman's protests. A dear little book, and one that children will like.

The History of Tom Thumb.

Illus. with hand-colored pictures by Hilda Scott. Helen and Bruce Gentry, San Francisco, 1934. Holiday House, 1939.

Thumbelina. By Hans Christian Andersen. Ed. by Vernon Ives. Illus. by Hilda Scott. Holiday House, 1939. Boxed together, \$2.00.

These diminutive volumes (each $3\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ ") in their star-spattered red box are well worth their two dollars. They are beautiful typographically, with wide margins and astonishingly uncrowded pages for such small books, and dainty, hand-colored decorations. They are well-bound, and they have the undeniable charm of small things. One can imagine that a gift of these little books might start a child on the happy road of book-collecting. A space is reserved on the end-papers of each volume for the thumb-print of the owner.

Hannah Marie. By Richard Bennett. Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran, 1939. \$1.50.

Paddy and Joe and Hannah Marie sat with their chins in their hands, "and their faces were as long as a wet week," for they wanted very much to give Great-Grandma Bessie presents worthy of her one hundredth birthday. How each of them tried, and failed, and the part played by the mysterious little

donkey make a good story for children up to nine. Ireland is the setting.

Pedro, Nina, and Perrito. Lithographs by Barbara Latham. Story by Lily Duplaix. Harper, 1939. \$1.50.

In this handsome picture book, drawings and text tell the story of two Mexican children and their dog, Perrito. The bold-eyed children, their taste for ornate furnishings and violent colors give the book an exciting strangeness, but young readers will find a kinship with Pedro and Nina in a common love of merry-go-rounds and pop and all the excitement of a carnival.

Appleby John, the Miller's Lad. By Shelia Hawkins. Harper, 1939.

This picture book is good fun for children up to eight, or so, although it may have to be read aloud because of the dialect.

Appleby John was a simple person, and when he was hired by the Miller, things didn't go well at first. Children will laugh at Appleby John's mishaps and will be glad when everything turns out so happily, for in the end, everyone laughs—the Miller, the Farmer, all the animals, and the reader.

Mei Li. By Thomas Handforth.

Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran, 1938. \$2.00.

Two years ago, Frederic Melcher, donor of the Newbery Medal, gave a second medal, this time for the most distinguished American picture book for children. Like the Newbery prize, the award is made by the Children's Librarians' Section of the American Library Association. Mei Li received the award this year, and a very beautiful book it is. The story is of how Mei Li goes

to the New Year fair in Peiping.

Toplofty. By Fjeril Hess. Illus. by Ruth King. Macmillan, 1939. \$2.00.

Miss Hess is a member of the editorial board of the Girl Scouts, and this book has the approval of that organization. The characters are those that appeared in an earlier novel, "Shanty Brook Lodge." The story tells what happened when the girls converted the loft of an apartment building into a club room. Miss Hess writes a brisk style, and her narrative is breezily interesting to girls of 12 to 16.

All Over Town. By Carol Ryrie Brink. Illus. by Dorothy Bayley. Macmillan, 1939. \$2.00.

It was not long after the Rev. Mr. Dawlish, his wife, and two sons moved to Warsaw Junction that



Francie on the Run. Written and illustrated by Hilda van Stockum. Viking, 1939.



Barney of the North. By Margaret S. and Helen L. Johnson. Harcourt.

the ladies of the congregation began to feel that they should have a minister who was a bachelor, or one whose children were grown up and lived in another town. It was often that way with the Dawlishes. But Ardith, who lived next door, was loath to lose her playmates, the Dawlish boys, and devised a startling plan to keep them as neighbors. It was to bring backsliders to church, and to accomplish this, the children formed the B. B. P. C. A.—Buffalo Bills Pious Children's Aid.

This is one of the best books Mrs. Brink has written—funny to children and adults alike, and a realistic picture of a middle-western village in horse and buggy days.

The Fire Fighter. By Henry B. Lent. Illus. by Earle Winslow. Macmillan, 1939. \$1.50.

Fire-fighting organizations, equipment, and traditions have all the luster of danger, heroism, and adventure. The interest they arouse is peculiarly wholesome for it is entirely free from crime, and is concerned with preservation rather than destruction of property and lives.

"The Fire Fighter" is New York's newest fire-boat and the largest fire-boat in the world. Any story about her, and Engine Company 57 is bound to be exciting. This book tells of the organization of the alarm system, the equipment of the boat, and the operation of the boat at a fire.

SCHOOL-BOOKS

Building Correct English. Grades 2 to 6, inclusive, with an Introductory First Book. By D. H. Patton,

Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Toledo, Ohio; Audrey Courtier, Teacher and Analyst of Children's Literature, Chicago, Illinois; and Mildred McCann, Demonstration and Grade Teacher, Clinton School, Columbus, Ohio. Harrison and Co. 1939. Introductory Book, and Second and Third Grade, 21c each. Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades, 27c each.

These work books are exceptionally well manufactured, and by virtue of this, harmonize effectively with the sound pedagogical aims of the series. They are bound in durable paper covers, with attractive pictures in color. Each volume is printed on sight-conserving paper, green-tinted, and is set in type chosen for maximum ease in reading. Illustrations in black and white are designed to quicken the interest of the pupils. Mechanically and pedagogically, the books will stand up well under hard use.

The publishers appear to be justified in their claims that the content is based on modern schoolroom needs. Features emphasized are (1) "child-centered situations," (2) "ample functional drill," and (3) "schoolroom authorship."

An interesting feature of the series is the unification of authorship throughout the grades; all three authors concentrated upon each of the six books, which would seem to give strength to the series over books developed in sets, with a separate group of authors at each grade level. A sensible ratio between social activities and genuine language experiences has been maintained throughout, thus sustaining text-book values in the series. This should mean that while the children make normal, pleasurable responses to the unit centers of interest, they will not relax in endeavor, and confuse achievement with dawdling.

The Disney-Heath Story Books. *Donald Duck and his Friends.* By Walt Disney and Jean Ayer. *Mickey Never Fails.* By Walt Disney and Robin Palmer. *School Days in Disneyville.* By Walt Disney and Caroline D. Emerson. *Little Pig's Picnic and Other Stories.* By Walt Disney and Margaret Wise Brown. D. C. Heath, 1939. 68c each.

Here at last seems to be the longed-for ideal: pedagogically sound readers combined with high literary quality, irresistible subject-matter, and charming illustrations.

Little Pig's Picnic deals with farmyard animals, wild and tame. The stories are interspersed with jingles, and one story, "The Flying Mouse," is rhymed and rhythmical, although printed in regular paragraph form. Children will have great fun discovering that it is really poetry.

A new house, with its plastering and painting, the installation of a hot-water system and oil-burning furnace, furnishes the subject-matter for *Mickey Never Fails*. The characters are Mickey and Minnie, Aunt Matilda, and Monty and Morty. There is no stodgy smuggling of information in story disguise, however. It is all good fun, and children will enjoy the bear behind the furnace, and the pet alligator.

Such universal school-room experiences as Thanksgiving exercises, Donald's inability to spell, and his excellence in arithmetic, the giggling little pigs (they have their human counterparts), and the school picnic make up *School Days in Disneyville*.

Donald Duck and his Friends is perhaps the most truly child-like of the four books. The author senses accurately children's lofty disdain for distance and difficulty, and their sense of humor. How youngsters will laugh at the story of Hortense Ostrich's lunch, and the way the penguins turned the tables on poor Donald!



Mateo and Lolita. By Burr Durfee and Helen and John McMorris. Houghton Mifflin.

The illustrations show the loved characters in soft color, and the books are gaily, and substantially bound.

Editorial

"What Are Little Boys Made Of?"

RATHER PERSISTENTLY, teachers of children in grade schools have been saying how unfortunate it is that the Newbery awards for the "most distinguished contribution to American Literature for Children" should be made by a committee that appears to read these books so uniformly from a single point of view. They are saying that one might conclude after examining the book awards over a period of years, that judges who know children as teachers do, and who accordingly have full opportunity to become acquainted with children's reading tastes and interests have had no part in the making of these awards.

There do seem to be some grounds for these criticisms. Too often there has been a kind of faded prettiness in the books that are chosen, something sweetly reminiscent of an adult's childhood, but all too little of the stuff that the dreams of real boys and girls are made of. Certainly there are grounds here for the suspicion that some of these choices have been too strongly influenced by some aesthetic appeal in these books dear to the adult reader, but not to the child. One may look in vain, in many of these books, for the stuff that quickens the pulse of young people, or awakens in them the spirit of adventure in reading.

Just imagine, if you can, the average tousled-headed American boy, or for that matter, his girl counterpart, sitting down for an hour to read *Thimble Summer* by Elizabeth Enright (Newbery Award, 1939), or *Roller Skates* by Ruth Sawyer, or *Caddie Woodlawn* by Carol Ryrie Brink (who can and has written books of great vigor and technical excellence

for boys and girls) or *The Cat Who Went to Heaven* by Elizabeth Coatsworth.

On the other hand, one can imagine this average American boy's reading with zest *The Dark Frigate* by Charles Boardman Hawes (the 1924 Newbery Award) or Hendrik Willem Van Loon's substantial *Story of Mankind* (the first Newbery prize book, 1922).

Look again at *Thimble Summer*, the gossamer summer bouquet on the outside front cover, repeated on the end papers; but what of a carry-over in the story itself? The young reader must patiently read on and on—to chapter 5 to the lively pick-up of "Locked In." Then, indeed, there comes reward, and perhaps reward enough for the persevering youngster who finds a good story unfolding thereafter in lively events.

Yet one finds passages moving heavily in such incidents as the arrival of young Eric at the burning kiln (pp. 40-46). And Garnet over and over again loses herself to young readers in mature reflections and adult parlance.

The question still remains unanswered; why was this book chosen when so many others, more popular with boys and girls, and superior in literary merit, were passed over? For example, there was *Storms on the Labrador*, by Hepburn Dinwiddie, a vigorous and moving story; there was *At the Sign of the Golden Compass*, by Eric P. Kelly, a book of genuine distinction.

One wonders what the results would be if the committee on awards were representative of both teachers and librarians, and indeed, of other groups sympathetically interested in children's reading.

—C. C. CERTAIN

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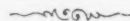
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